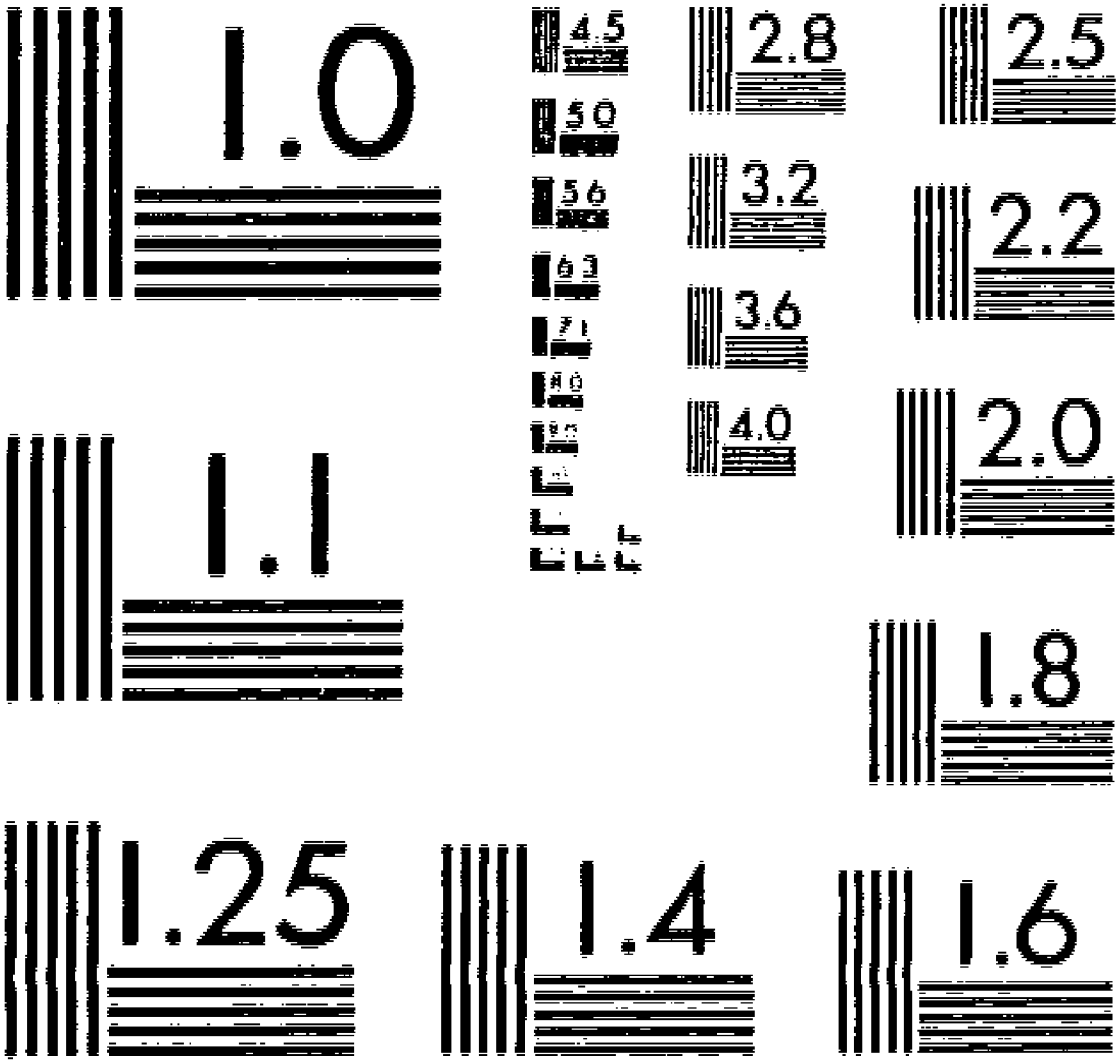

MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 060 848 JC 720 092

AUTHOR	Koos, Leonard V.
TITLE	Needed Research Concerning the Community College Student.
INSTITUTION	Florida Univ., Gainesville. Inst. of Higher Education.
PUB DATE	Apr 72
NOTE	20p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Articulation (Program); Cocurricular Activities; *College High School Cooperation; Educational Research; *Junior Colleges; *Junior College Students; *Research Needs; *Student College Relationship; Students

ABSTRACT

As a result of compiling a recent comprehensive review of information on community college students, the author of this paper identifies areas where further research is needed. First, community colleges should be acquainted with who is not attending college. Knowledge of the needs and interests of potential students is necessary for program planning and for estimates of future enrollment. A second area of major importance for research concerns the impact of the community college on its students. Here, longitudinal studies of student attitudes, values and maturation levels are needed. The third area is the recreational activities and interests of community college students and of later adolescents generally; this would include all leisure time activities such as television viewing and reading habits. Lastly, research is needed to cast light on the "linkages" between high schools and community colleges such as coordinated guidance and testing programs, and the impact of these linkage arrangements on students. (LP)

NEEDED RESEARCH CONCERNING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

by
Leonard V. Koos

Institute of Higher Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

April, 1972

Foreword

Few people have had an opportunity to observe the sweep of development of a social institution such as the community college over an entire history. L. V. Koos is almost alone in this capacity for the community college. The first definitive description of the junior college was completed by him in the early 1920's; a more recent description of the community college student was completed by him in 1970.

In the brief analysis of needed research presented herein, Koos once again demonstrates his scholarship resulting in keen analysis, his knowledge of the field resulting in a broad sensitivity to the community college needs, and his humaness resulting in continued concern for those who are untouched by currently available opportunities.

In a series of analyses the author asks several specific questions:

Who is not attending; and why?
What is the impact of the community college?
What are the recreational concerns of community college students?
What are the patterns of linkages?

The attempt to find answers to these questions will form basic research activities for many students who follow. The first course in Higher Education was taught at the University of Minnesota by Leonard V. Koos in the 1920's. Teachers who work in this area of study will find his current call for research both applicable and pertinent.

The Institute of Higher Education is pleased to present this overview.

James L. Wattenbarger, Director
Institute of Higher Education

NEEDED RESEARCH CONCERNING THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT

by Leonard V. Koos

While working up a synthesis[1] of all available reports on research about later adolescents and community (junior) college students, the writer learned of, and made it a point to identify, the inadequacies of evidence and limitations of the procedures used in past investigations. Work on the synthesis was carried on over such a long period of years that it was necessary to revise portions of the manuscript from time to time in order to try to keep it up to date with the findings of more recent research projects. Even so, it deserves mention in passing that it is impossible to have a book fully up to date when, in the case of a large book, it usually takes a year or more to bring the completed manuscript into published form.

In this presentation there is no pretense that the recommendations are comprehensive of all desirable research. One person could hardly be cognizant of them all, and it would require more than a single brief presentation to identify and explain even as many as one person (who has tried to make himself conversant with the whole field) thinks he sees. Besides, some conscious omissions are made: illustrative of these, notwithstanding their importance, are research into manifestations of "hippie" life, drug addiction, and protest and violence on campus. Attention to these in this writer's published synthesis is negligible because evidence from competent systematic study of them

in any considerable quantity was not then available. Most of the treatments that were extant were not the work of behavioral scientists but were rather fervent accounts of conditions and events in the mass media. Fortunately for better understanding of students, more objective and, therefore, more discriminating analyses have recently been published, although they are still far from adequate, especially as they relate to the junior college student population.

The organization of this presentation does not follow the order of treatment in the published synthesis, which begins with a background consideration of later adolescence and then proceeds with a focus on the student population itself. The order of mention in the treatise of the gaps and deficiencies is merely that of their emergence, and the outcome of such a long and fragmentary listing might be more confusing than helpful. Nor is the order of presentation here by topics or by neatly preplanned projects; it is rather by broad areas. Resolution of the issues in each of the areas would be by investigative pursuit of composites or batteries of projects made up of individual inquiries of widely varying magnitude. The areas, four in number, follow. The order of listing is unrelated to priority.

Who Is Not Attending, and Why?

One of these important areas in which research is needed is in demographic inquiries into populations attending and not attending our community colleges. The evidence from earlier investigations in this area is outdated and has never been adequate. To plan strategies for complete service, the movement must have viable current information along many lines concerning these populations. Recent word that

Dorothy Knoell is at work on a project in this area under subsidy by the Ford Foundation is both acknowledgment of the need and assurance of substantial progress toward meeting that need in important aspects.

The findings of these demographic researches could be checked against "target populations" of community colleges recently projected by Wattenbarger and collaborators.[2] This projection, done in conjunction with efforts to ascertain costs and cost differentials for various programs, predicted junior college enrollments for 1970 and 1980 in seven states and for the country as a whole. The states are among those in the nation with more extensive development of junior colleges than others and are the locations of 15 junior colleges referred to as "exemplary" and relied on for basic data pertaining to costs and financing. Projections of total enrollments were made on the basis of current enrollment in junior colleges per 1,000 population in the districts of location.

For nine of these exemplary junior colleges that had been in operation more than three years the mean ratio was found to be 21 per 1,000. The report states, "If community colleges in general serve as well in the future as the exemplary colleges selected in this study are serving the local citizens, then it would seem reasonable to assume that the population of the entire country will be attending community colleges in a ratio approximating" this mean. Employing a ratio of 20 students per 1,000 population in each state, and in the United States as a whole, the authors arrive at a projection of 4,500,000 students by 1980. On the basis of 50 per 1,000, which is not far in excess of the 45 per 1,000 already achieved by one of the exemplary districts represented in the project, community colleges "could expected to reach more than 12,000,000 people by 1980."[3]

Such a projection, to be sure, is not restricted to full-time students. The report mentioned lists illustrative groups in populations of the exemplary districts that now avail themselves of of opportunities for part-time education as "housewives who want to improve themselves culturally, who want to become better homemakers, and who wish to prepare for gainful employment;" "teachers...who wish to gain more expertise in areas outside their specialty;" "those who wish to change jobs as their old jobs become obsolete;" "those who are employed and find their opportunities for advancement blocked by lack of education;" "senior citizens...who want to build upon an interest which had been postponed from younger and busier days," as well as those looking "merely for the companionship found in those who share mutual interests."[4]

These motivations are illustrative only, as the needs spread over the full array of developmental tasks that shift in character from one age level to the next at the same time they are undergoing modification by profound social changes. The complexities of change make continuous education, either institutional or self-directed, a part of the "way of life."

It is certainly no less urgent for community colleges to make intensive and extensive demographic inquiries into current populations than to make projections of these target populations. To make evidence maximally useful, these inquiries should be periodically repeated. They are needed within each of the individual districts or areas served by the community colleges and for each state. Findings at the local and state levels should be pieced together to obtain a national measure of progress toward universalization. The studies

should include all the population beyond the high school age span through to senility. For results to yield optimal utility, the studies should follow such groupings as (1) later adolescence, (2) early adulthood, (3) middle age, and (4) later maturity. A sub-grouping of later adolescents should be of (a) high school graduates and (b) school dropouts.

While these demographic inquiries should find out who is in attendance at the community colleges (and other institutions operating at this level), their focus, because of the goal of universalization, should be on information about those not attending, with the aim of identifying obstacles to attendance. These may include socioeconomic status and family income, education of parents, ethnic and racial background, distance from educational opportunity as provided by the community college (or other institutions), and further factors influencing motivation for attendance. From such demographic inquiries as those reported, a disturbing influence is that many who might benefit most are least inclined to attend.

Identification of obstacles to attendance for individuals or groups among the population will be followed logically by strategies to remove them. While not strictly a part of the demographic inquiries, the cause-and-effect relationships of these strategies must be investigated in intimate association with the obstacles identified. Among the strategies that have been used, and various combinations of which appear now to be effective, are: Total removal or reduction of charges for tuition and fees, provision of scholarships and loan funds (available to the less able as well as to youth of superior aptitude), part-time cooperative and work-experience programs and other curriculum offerings

and arrangements promising relevance for many in the population with limited motivation. Other strategies include multiplication of locations in the district where instruction is made available to achieve proximity and making continuous and protracted counseling and guidance services available not only to students enrolled but to all educable later adolescents and adults in the districts. Although counseling programs for youth enrolled in community colleges are now undergoing rapid development, the service has, to date, seldom been extended to youth out of school and to the adult population.

What Impact of the Community College?

A second area of major importance for research concerns the impact of the community college on its students. Reports of inquiries in this area are almost nonexistent and, for the most part, concern qualities of personality or attitudes at a given time, as at admission, without looking into any influence of attendance on its programs. The import of what is involved here is suggested by brief reference to certain items in the literature dealing with the impact of four-year colleges. Concern over impact of these institutions was catapulted to prominence in 1957 by Philip Jacobs' Changing Values in College[5], the report of an investigation, the main effect of which was a challenge to the traditional assumption that college education is pervasively and positively influential on the attitudes and values of students.

The challenge aroused much controversy and stimulated the proliferation during the '60s of a multitude of additional research in this area of impact. A project done recently by Feldman and Newcomb has synthesized and summarized these investigations and the following is an excerpt from their "overview" of the results of something like

1,500 studies that have been made:

> In terms of relatively consistent uniformities in net direction of change, some changes that are characteristic of nearly all American colleges have emerged. Most salient are 'openmindedness' (reflected in declining authoritarianism, dogmatism, and prejudice), decreasing conservatism in regard to public issues, and growing sensitivity to aesthetic and inner experiences. In addition, a majority of studies show declining commitment to religion, increasing interest in intellectual interests and capacities, and increases in independence, dominance, and confidence as well as in readiness to express impulses.[6]

It cannot be assumed that these generalizations are at once applicable to the community college student. They were drawn in the main from research comparing seniors with freshmen in the four-year institutions, whereas the institution of our interest is limited to a two-year span. Besides, while characteristics of the populations of two-year and four-year colleges overlap to a considerable degree and in many respects, they also manifest differences, as in distribution on measures of aptitude, aspiration and motivation which must produce differences in impact. In addition to the brief two-year span, attrition in the community college is so high that, on the average, half the entering students are gone by the beginning of the second year and only about a fourth survive the second year to transfer to the senior college. This situation makes it imperative, if impact is to be investigated, that the instruments used have their initial application in later high school years, thus requiring cooperation of secondary schools, or at the opening of the first college year, and that all investigations be longitudinal rather than cross-sectional. Using only cross-sectional evidence in such a situation would force comparisons of attitudes in large part of different populations instead of impact on attitude of identical populations.

To indicate more specifically the concept of impact in mind, it may be well to quote a definition of attitude by Rokeach, who has done much to clarify terminology by distinguishing the meaning of terms like "attitude," "value," "opinion," etc.: "Attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."[7]

Concern here is not with the cognitive learning or skills imparted by individual courses, which are measured by course examination; although, admittedly, cognitive learnings modify or otherwise condition students' attitudes. To be sure, attitudes influenced by courses contribute to the composite of attitudes of the individual, but it is the totality of institutional impact that Feldman and Newcomb undertook to synthesize for the four-year colleges and which, analogously, would be under scrutiny in the research being proposed here.

Fortunately for this area of inquiry, attitude research now seems to be occupying a central position in the field of social psychology, and a large number of instruments are at hand for application or adaptation and improvement for projects relating to the community college. Shaw and Wright[8] have compiled, described, and classified 175 such scales and related devices.

One observation by these authors in appraisal of such instruments should be mentioned, that the instruments are more useful for measuring attitudes of groups than of individuals. However, this does not detract from their applicability for the purpose advocated here.

A mere listing of some of the categories of attitudes the scales have been devised to measure suggests their potential for inquiry. Among many others, scales included in the study by these authors under

"social practices" are designed to measure attitude "toward discipline exercised by parents," "toward self-reliance," "toward earning a living," and "intimacy-permissiveness." Under "social issues and problems" are scales on birth control, socialized medicine, capital punishment, and desegregation; under "international issues," scales on nationalism, worldmindedness, and militarism-pacifism; and under "abstract concepts," scales on law-abidingness, evolution, freedom of information, and aesthetic values. Under "political and religious attitudes" are scales on liberalism-conservatism, religion and philosophy of life, and humanitarianism; under "ethnic and national groups," scales measuring familism and attitudes toward parents, police, and juvenile delinquency; and under "social institutions," scales of attitude toward union labor, newspapers, and the church.

Although changes under all these categories of attitudes, as well as of many others, are germane to the question of impact of the community college, some of them may be regarded as having special meaning for this institution because of the predominant age-level of its fulltime student body. A conspicuous example is to be found in the case of attitudes bearing on citizenship participation, projected into prominence by the latest amendment to the U. S. Constitution which lowers the age of voting to 18. It must be obvious that lowering the voting age imparts to political, economic, and social issues an immediacy, or relevancy, and motivation they could not have while there was a time-gap between consideration in the classroom and action on them by means of the ballot. This accentuates the appropriateness of the administration of scales to note attitudinal changes in position under categories like political-economic attitudes, law-abidingness, socialized

medicine, school integration, capital punishment, and juvenile delinquency, to name a few.

Another category of attitudes peculiarly significant for students of this age-level in community colleges, almost all of whom are living at home, is that of their relationships with parents and family. The goal here is increasing independence of parental control ("emancipation from parents"), which has been identified as one of the "developmental tasks" of adolescence. In considering these attitudes and this task, one recalls a recurrent criticism in some quarters that the community college movement, by keeping the youth in his home, is obstructing appropriate maturation and postponing growth toward desirable independence and autonomy. Indicative of this point of view may be that of Jencks, who advocated a change in policy of educational aid at the federal level of encouragement. He said:

> By shifting the emphasis from the support of institutions to the support of individuals, it might give somewhat higher priority to the need of many undergraduates for subsistence stipends. By failing to provide such support, even to the very needy, the present system encourages all but the affluent to attend commuter colleges which enable them to live 'on the cheap' at home. But for many such students getting away from home is the sine qua non of intellectual growth. A nation as rich as America ought to aim at providing every student who can benefit from it enough money to attend a residential college if he wants to.[9]

While Jencks identifies encouragement of intellectualism by college attendance remote from the home base, others appear to have in mind fostering independence, autonomy, and responsibility, which would be associated with emancipation from parents and family. The implication here is that those at work in the community colleges should be concerned with the issue, should be measuring growth toward emancipated maturity, and taking steps to foster it. For such measurement,

several of the instruments described by Shaw and Wright are usable, but may require adaptation and improvement.

Recreations and the Extracurriculum

Still another important area in which there is a serious dearth, almost to the extent of an "aching void," of inquiry is in the recreational activities and interests of community college students and of later adolescents generally. Traditionally, a focal concern of our society is one's vocation and a way to earn a living, and this is unquestionably important. This writer is among many who are becoming concerned that our traditional puritanical mores make us too exclusively favorable to empirical inquiries concerning work to the neglect of inquiry concerning play-life. It is all too apparent that many youth today are engaging in a plethora of untoward, disorganizing, and socially detrimental activities because they have not been sufficiently exposed to experiences in wholesome and constructive recreations. Also, we are frequently reminded these days that the progress of automation is rapidly shrinking hours of the working day and days of the working week and are affording adults increasing margins of recreational time of which most of them are unprepared to make good use.

We need the results of large-scale inquiries into recreational pursuits of later adolescents in our community colleges. These inquiries should study these pursuits as influenced by age, sex, class in school, general and special aptitudes, social status, occupation and education of parents, and denominational and ethnic background. They should encompass the full range of voluntary activities by including both in-school and out-of-school life. These activities

should be studied against the background of the courses and curriculums in which students have been and are enrolled, to note whether and in what degree the total school program has impact on the students' recreation.

Large-scale cross-sectional studies of this survey type should throw needed light on this aspect of youthful life and living. We are also in need, however, of extensive longitudinal, not merely cross-sectional, inquiries into special fields of recreational and other voluntary activity, such as physical play, televiewing and radio-listening, participation in and listening to music, and voluntary reading. If we single out the activity last named for illustration, it may be noted that there has been little more than token inquiry into how much and how the junior college student engages in it. Eells[10] almost thirty years ago reported a cross-sectional survey-type study of the reading of periodicals, the findings of which were not reassuring, as shown by the fact that Life and Readers' Digest, publications which minimize and thereby seem to disparage reading, alone accounted for well over a third of all reading done in periodicals. Inquiry should extend into the reading of books, magazines, and newspapers. Here again, cooperation of the students' former high schools must be solicited, as we cannot know about the impact of the community college without a knowledge of reading interests of the same students in the secondary schools. With inferences concerning impact, it will be possible to plan strategies in the program to foster progress in voluntary reading toward diversification or a maturing intellectualism, or whatever changes are deemed desirable.

Another area, in significant respects regardable as a sub-area of recreational life, in which the focus should be on participation by

the student and which has been too infrequently subjected to inquiry is the extracurriculum, or what is alternatively referred to as the "co-curriculum" or "student activities." In view of their range and scope in most junior colleges, the traditional assumptions concerning the value of participation in them, and the outlays of time by both students and faculty, it is disconcerting to find so little concerning extracurricular activities in investigative literature that tells us who participates in them and with what effect. Because of the obvious intimacy of relationship of these activities and organizations to recreation, research concerning them can, at least in some aspects, be joined, again in respect to age, sex, class, aptitude, social status, ethnic background, denominational preference, etc.

When compilations of extracurricular organizations are made for any considerable number of junior colleges, a substantial proportion is always found to have occupational designations. For example, in one such compilation for a random group of 21 public junior colelges, about a fifth of almost 400 organizations tallied had such designations. They include a wide variety, such as architecture, aviation, business administration, engineering, journalism, music education, prelaw, and premedicine. Thus, some of the organizations are not to be regarded as outlets exclusively for recreational expression, although pleasurable association of students with each other in the activities of the organizations can be assumed. Moreover, it is not without significance in respect to recreation that many adults engaged in the professions and other high level occupations to which the students in these organizations aspire often have hobbies closely related to their occupations. Occupations at this level can serve both as work and play life.

What Pattern of Linkages?

In considering our second and third areas of research as identified here, mention was made at certain points of the advantage or even necessity of cooperation in longitudinal studies of community colleges with the high schools from which their students come. Proposed here as a fourth area is inquiry into the whole array of community college-high school cooperative provisions, or what may be referred to as "linkages." In this area, investigation begins with inquiry into these cooperative arrangements, instead of with students, although it is concerned, nonetheless, with what the influence of the linkages is on them.

During the years when this writer was making frequent and extensive visits to junior colleges, he found a notably wide range of attitudes toward these cooperations and, therefore, a correspondingly wide variation in their extent and patterns. At one extreme were a few junior colleges with no or almost no linkages with the high schools and an aloofness from them not unlike that in the traditional college, where the high school, what goes on in it, and its product are rather consistently disparaged. At the other extreme were institutions working cooperatively with high schools in a large number of ways.

For most institutions the linkages were from a few to several. Among examples of these linkages, taken from notes made at the time and in the writer's memory, are: cooperation of guidance staffs at the two levels; coordinated testing programs; visiting days at the junior college for high school seniors' vocational or "career" conferences for high school seniors; collaboration of the two levels in designing cumulative and other record forms; joint meetings of faculties; curriculum committees of the two levels in some departments or subjects, as in

English, social studies, or mathematics, to foster articulation; interchange of faculty at the two levels; dual-level teaching by some members of the faculty; enrollment in college courses of superior and other high school seniors for parts or all of their programs; arrangements for college students to take courses in high school needed because of change in plans and/or curriculums; joint participation of students at the two levels in organizations like bands and orchestras; cooperative utilization of facilities; and many others.

The working hypotheses of research in this area would be that (a) situations with linkages better serve the needs of students than situations without them, and that (b) their effectiveness may vary with the patterns, or combinations of the linkages. The first hypothesis has the support of evidence from an exploratory study made by the writer a quarter century and more ago that found that guidance programs with closer linkages resulted in larger proportions of high school graduates continuing into the junior college and larger proportions enrolling in terminal occupational curriculums. Thus, close linkage in guidance appeared to encourage retention of seniors into the junior college and, presumably, to distribute them more appropriately to curriculums.

We know from other studies that larger proportions of junior college than of four-year college and university freshmen enter without occupational plans or with unrealistic ones, and a corollary of our hypothesis might be that linkages in this area can result in amelioration of this situation. If it does so, it could be inferred that these linkages would be providing the continuous and protracted counseling and guidance needed by a large proportion of youth to help make decisions

concerning their occupational plans and destinations. Analogous hypotheses could be set up for the impact of linkages in other elements of the total program, as in the curriculum and in student activities and services.

Research concerning the linkages might go forward in two stages, the first of which would be the survey type to find their scope and the variety of patterns in community colleges generally. The second would undertake to identify the more effective patterns--effective in the sense of favorable impact on students toward desirable goals.

Over the period of a generation and more we have had numerous studies on the success of transfers from junior colleges to senior colleges. Most of these have inquired into the success of transfers from individual junior colleges to senior institutions, several have been on a state-wide basis, and one, at least, may be regarded as on a nation-wide scale. The findings have stimulated efforts in some states and other situations to work out procedures or arrangements between institutions at these two levels to promote the likelihood of success of these transfers. These arrangements are, in a way, linkages of the community and senior colleges. Concern should surely be no less over appropriate linkages at the community college-high school level.

Toward Inquiry on a Wide Front

As already stated, the foregoing is put forward as no more than one man's opinion of needed research that bears on community college students. Another person going over the same ground might well see the needs differently. It should be said, also, that these recommendations for research concerning students are not made to urge a letup on research in other main aspects of the whole community college situation,

such as administrative organization and personnel, teaching faculty, curriculum and instruction, plant and facilities, financing and costs, and the like.

Problems in such aspects are no less urgently in need of solution by analytic approach, especially in a relatively new institution developing at such a rapid pace. And it does not seem that inquiries should be pressed ahead of others for any one of the four areas as [illegible] Now is none too soon for any or all of them. They are re-identified here in brief: (a) The demographic data on who is and who is not enrolled are outdated, were never adequate, and should be periodically renewed for each district, for each of the states, and for the country generally; (b) we have entertained too long a rather blind faith in the favorable impact of our institution and we should set about at once ascertaining what changes in attitude, if any, are being made in our students; (c) it is high time to look more intensively and discriminatingly into the recreations of students both in and out of school, as well as into the interrelationships of student activities and play-life; (d) because of the promising hypothesis that they foster attainment of desirable goals for students, we should look into the linkages between community colleges and the high schools from which their students come in such a way as to identify their patterns and to ascertain the impact any of these may have on the students.

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